

# Maine H1N1 Influenza (“Swine Flu”) Update

Summary of Information and Activities for Monday, May 18, 2009, 4 PM

**Flu info on the Internet:** <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml>

- **Maine Data:** **8 confirmed cases; 2 additional probable cases** are awaiting final confirmation from US CDC. US CDC has ruled out 4 probable Maine H1N1 cases.
- **National Data:** US CDC reports 5,123 confirmed and probable cases and 5 deaths (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>).
- **International Data:** WHO reports 8,829 cases in 40 countries (<http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>).

## Recent Activity:

### Case finding:

- There are eight confirmed and two probable cases in Maine: one adult in Kennebec County, three adults and one youth in York County, two adults and two youths in Cumberland County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All cases are recovering, including an adult in Cumberland County who was recently released from a hospital.
- US CDC used advanced laboratory testing to rule out two probable Maine H1N1 cases, determining that they are cases of seasonal flu. Both cases were an uncommon type of seasonal influenza for testing purposes. The Maine CDC public health laboratory has received new equipment and will soon have the ability to do confirmatory H1N1 testing, eliminating the need to submit specimens to US CDC and speeding the testing process.
- As the infection spreads and re-circulates, the numbers of cases and specific locations become less meaningful. There clearly are other people with H1N1 in Maine who have not yet been identified. The ten cases described above simply indicate the presence of H1N1 in Maine.
- There appears to be a high spread among children and young adults.

### Key messages:

- H1N1 poses the threat of being at least as serious as seasonal flu. As the infection spreads we expect to see some increase in severity, as has been seen nationally. In addition, because this is a new virus, most people do not have natural immunity to it and no vaccine is yet available.
- We all need to stay informed, be prepared, and practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
  - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
  - If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.
- Because recommendations from U.S. CDC are updated frequently, we urge clinicians, school officials, and others to review the most updated guidance before making clinical or closure decisions. US CDC guidance and recommendations can be accessed at this site: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/>.

### General Information

- In addition to the information published on our website, those wanting general information about H1N1 may call our toll-free information line at (888) 257-0990; NexTalk (deaf/hard of hearing): (207) 629-5751. The line operates weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

If you have comments, questions or feedback about this Update, please contact us at (207) 287-6372.